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SUBJECT: Media: MFA Denies Argument between Babacan and Guliev;
Columnists Warn Azerbaijan about Russia

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2009

In Today's Papers

Foreign Ministry Denies Babacan Chided Guliev at BSEC
Mainstream Hurriyet reports that the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) officially denied press reports that Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan argued with Azerbaijan's deputy Foreign Minister Memed Guliev at the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) summit in Yerevan this weekend. The MFA's statement said "Foreign Minister Ali Babacan had a useful and friendly meeting with Memed Guliev in Yerevan. And our ties with Azerbaijan continue closely at every level."

In a related story, conservative-nationalist Turkiye and Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak quote PM Erdogan in Germany as saying, "Opening up the Turkey-Armenia border depends upon a solution to the Upper-Karabagh dispute. Turkey will not open the border with Armenia before the Upper-Karabakh issue is resolved."

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan

Semih Idiz writes in the mainstream Milliyet: "While Baku flirts with Moscow, Baku must remember that Russia has played an important role in Baku's loss of Nagorno Karabakh, and some other Azerbaijani territories, to Armenia. Baku cannot reach its goals regarding Karabakh by drawing closer to Russia. With Russia's invasion of Georgia last August, Moscow has shown that it still maintains a Stalinist 'divide and rule' policy. Russia will never press Armenia for a settlement before undertaking guarantees regarding the autonomy of Karabakh, which, in practice, will mean independence for the breakaway region."

Ardan Zenturk observes in the mass-appeal, pro-government Star: "After Moscow's recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and a decision to establish Russian ground and naval bases with the deployment of 3,800 troops and 10 navy ships in the breakaway region, NATO decided to reach out to Georgia. Turkey, the US, Britain, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Greece, Canada, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary,

Moldova, Serbia, Spain, Macedonia and the United Arab Emirates will participate in the two NATO exercises (Cooperative Longbow 09 and Lancer 09) to be held at the Vaziani military base near Tbilisi from May 6-June 1. We see a diverse list of countries will participate because NATO considers these exercises to be within the framework of 'The Partnership for Peace' initiative and thus accepts non-NATO members' participation. After meeting FM Babacan in Yerevan, Russian FM Lavrov said it was not right to hold NATO exercises in a region which recently went through a war. Abkhazia made Russia's discomfort clear by announcing it will hold a military exercise within its own territory at the same time of the NATO exercises. Turkey is in the midst of a chain of developments in a critical region and Turkey must be careful to not be dragged into a position of 'a front country.' We must be careful and keep our calm."

Tulin Daloglu writes in the mainstream Haberturk: "American officials believe Azerbaijani President Aliyev's Moscow visit was a 'reaction against Turkey.' They are concerned over Azerbaijan's announcement of Russia as 'a strategic partner,' and question how Turkey lost Azerbaijan. The Azeri officials gave the message that if the AKP administration will work without taking into consideration the 'emotional bonds' between the two countries, then Moscow could be a better choice to defend the Azerbaijani interests. This approach is largely dominated by the concern over the fact that Georgia has not received significant help following the Russian invasion. Washington's calculation was that the normalization of Ankara-Yerevan ties would partly reduce Russian influence on Armenia. Azerbaijan, however, disrupted such an expectation. If Turkey is to follow a multi-dimensional policy, it must take the consent of all sides for a settlement. Ankara cannot become a

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regional power nor defend its own interests by selling out its friends."

General Odierno Meets with Massoud Barzani

Mainstreams Hurriyet and Milliyet report that the commander of the multinational force in Iraq, General Ray Odierno met with Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani in Selahaddin town. The reports indicate that Kirkuk, the latest developments in northern Iraq, regional security, PKK activities and Turkey were on the agenda of the meeting.

Iraqi President Talabani: Disarmament Doesn't Mean Surrender

Mainstream Sabah and liberal Radikal report that in an interview with Al-Hurra TV, Iraqi President Celal Talabani said "We are hopeful that the PKK will lay down its arms soon; the trilateral commission between Turkey, the US and Iraq is working on this issue.

This century is not a century for weapons, instead this is the century of peace and political approaches. If the PKK lays down arms, this will not mean to surrender but it will mean the end of war and beginning of political process."

111.000 People Marched to Anit Kabir to Protest the Arrest of

Bashkent University President Professor Haberal

Hurriyet, Radikal, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet and others: The Turkish General Staff web page carried the Anit Kabir Command's report indicating that 111,000 people marched to Anit Kabir on Saturday to protest the arrest of Baskent University Rector Prof. Mehmet Haberal under the Ergenekon investigation. Haberal remains in intensive care for treatment of a heart condition.

Editorial Commentary on the Ergenekon Case

Rusen Cakir warns in mainstream Vatan: "The Ergenekon investigation has strayed from its main target of eliminating a 'terror organization' that is deeply rooted in the state and extends out to all walks of life. The Association for Supporting Modern Life and the Modern Education Foundation, targeted in the latest wave of the Ergenekon detentions, have been rivals to the Fettullah Gulen community's similar activities. During the February 28 process in Turkey, the secularists tried to eliminate all Islamic sects in the country, including the Gulen group. The Gulen group survived the attacks, and now, by using the Ergenekon investigation, it is out to eliminate its rivals. The group must remember that the February 28 efforts to eliminate them had backfired, just as the group's efforts

today to eliminate its rivals will backfire."

The Opposition Wins in northern Cyprus

All papers: Dervis Eroglu's National Unity Party (UBP) won the elections in northern Cyprus by winning 44 percent of the votes and 26 seats in parliament. Meanwhile the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) won 29 percent of the votes and 15 seats. Milliyet says that, with this result, a new era will have begun in northern Cyprus and the course of negotiations with the Greek Cypriots will change. Liberal Radikal calls the elections results "A 'No-Solution' Victory." Sabah reports that in a speech after the elections, Dervis Eroglu called for unity and support for President Mehmet Ali Talat in unification talks.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Cyprus Elections

Ferai Tinc observes in mainstream Hurriyet: "Sunday's general elections leaves Turkish Cyprus with a president who has backed the Annan Plan for the reunification of the island and a government that opposes it. Insisting on 'no-solution policies' will not take Turkish Cyprus anywhere. The political divisions in Turkey should not be allowed to effect the Turkish Cypriots, and the AKP must cease its attitude which leaves out the opposition in northern Cyprus. Election results indicate the Turkish Cypriots' disappointment with the EU as well as with the efforts for a solution. This, of course, doesn't mean that Turkish Cypriots do not want a solution and a life without sanctions."

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TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- A member of the Trabzon municipality assembly triggered controversy in the AKP when she wanted to wear Islamic style headscarf at assembly meetings.
- Deputy PM Nazim Ekren said talks with IMF will be finalized soon.

World

- French Police have arrested the military chief of ETA Jurdan Martitegi.
- A suspect in the investigation into the murder of former Lebanese PM Hariri has been arrested in Dubai.
- Italy agrees to accept 140 migrants stranded aboard a Turkish cargo ship, which rescued them in the Mediterranean.
- NATO forces patrolling the Gulf of Aden foiled a pirate attack on a Norwegian tanker this weekend.

JEFFREY